



COMMUNITY ALLIANCE
WITH FAMILY FARMERS

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CALFED Bay-Delta Program

P.O. Box 363

Davis, CA

95617-0363

Phone:

530.756.8518

Fax:

530.756.7857

E-mail:

caff@caff.org

Web site:

www.caff.org



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March 17, 2000

Mike Madigan
Chair, BDAC
1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155
Sacramento CA 95814

Dear Mr. Madigan,

Thank you for your facilitation of BDAC's review of the Preferred Program Alternative. I understand that you are developing a statement that will summarize our position.

We propose to strengthen two points in the final statement. The first has to do with the section on balancing competing needs and the second has to do with linkages between various program elements.

It has been challenging trying to develop a workable position based on input from competing stakeholders, each of whom has an agenda to promote. The stakeholders represent important viewpoints (business, agriculture, environment) and each can raise significant funds to demonstrate that their agenda has the support of community leaders. We all hope that the best answer will result from some sort of blend of various viewpoints, combined with good science. In general this system is a tremendous improvement over policy-making behind closed doors.

CAFF's constituency and "agenda" are themselves an interesting blend of the competing needs expressed around the BDAC table. Half of our members are farmers who come to agriculture both as business people and as environmentalists. The other half are community people, who for various reasons support sustainable agriculture as a fundamental cornerstone of California's future. While we fully support environmental restoration, we believe that agriculture can and must be a partner in that effort. Within our organization we have worked hard to create solutions that meet economic and environmental needs at the same time.

There has been a lot of discussion at BDAC about "balancing competing needs" and avoiding "redirected impacts." While stakeholders generally think first of the needs of their own constituencies, a broader view would argue that none of us will be served well if our actions exacerbate inequities that already exist in agricultural communities. I am referring here to the wholesale rush to endorse water markets and retirement of agricultural land without much more than lip service to potential adverse

impacts on agricultural communities and the environment. While the interests of buyers and sellers are being negotiated by lawyers, it is wise for a group like BDAC to think more broadly of the public good.

I recommend that our motion and/or its preamble make a strong statement that it is the responsibility of public agencies to protect local communities and environments from adverse impacts that might result from retiring agricultural land or selling water to the highest bidder. This would have to include sensitivity to the tremendous environmental value of our agricultural soils and of the groundwater, as well as an analysis of third party economic impacts. Whenever this issue is raised, we are told that it is not the responsibility of CALFED to address social issues. This may be true, but we have all agreed together that we do not want to make things worse than when we started out on this journey.

I would also like to address the issue of linkages, used most often in reference to storage. Although new storage is being proposed primarily as a source of water to improve water quality and to provide for environmental flows, it is the need for water for these purposes that is constraining deliveries to the major agricultural and business interests. Despite arguments to the contrary, I am convinced that we must find mechanisms that require a high level of commitment to water use efficiency by all sectors of the economy.

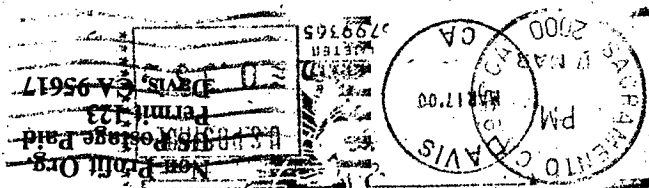
The water transfers work group recommended that access to new water markets should be linked to water use efficiency. We felt that purchase of water from outside the watershed should not be allowed unless a high level of water use efficiency had been achieved by buyers.

For these reasons, we endorse the section of the statement regarding linkages, with the addition of explicit mention of linkage to water markets.

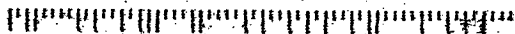
Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,


Judith Redmond



Eugenia Laychak
Bailea
1416 Ninth St Suite 1155
Sacramento CA 95814



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P.O. Box 363
Davis, CA
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